

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 122348
ORIGIN NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 SSM-05 H-02 PA-02
ISO-00 MCE-00 EB-08 INR-10 INRE-00 SSO-00 SS-15
SP-02 ACDA-12 HA-05 MCT-01 /110 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

PA/PRS - MR. CARTER

H - MR. FLATEN

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN

NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER

NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----089520 130146Z /70

O 122328Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USCINCEUR
USICA
DOD

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MAY 12

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MAY 12, 1978.

Q. WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ON THE PLANE SALE PACKAGE
NOW?

A. WHERE WE ARE NOW IS WITH A PACKAGE, AS IT TURNS OUT,
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UP FOR VOTE BY THE FULL SENATE, DESPITE OUR BEST
EFFORTS TO HAVE IT DEALT WITH AS FOUR PROPOSALS.

IN ANY CASE, WE HOPE AND BELIEVE THAT ON MONDAY WHEN THE
VOTE IS TAKEN THAT WE WILL HAVE THE SIMPLE MAJORITY
REQUIRED TO PASS -- THAT IS TO SAY TO REJECT THE
DISAPPROVAL.

Q. IN THAT CASE IF THE VOTE TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY AND THE
ADMINISTRATION WINS IT, THEN WHATEVER HAPPENS IN THE HOUSE
BECOMES MOOT; IS THAT RIGHT?

A. ALTHOUGH I REALLY WOULDN'T WANT TO SPEAK FOR ANY
HOUSE MEMBERS, THE ANSWER IS YES AND TECHNICALLY SPEAKING
THERE WOULD BE NO REASON FOR A VOTE IN THE HOUSE.

Q. AMONG THIS BEWILDERING ARRAY OF PARLIAMENTARY
PROCEDURES THAT ARE BEING TALKED ABOUT, DOES THE
ADMINISTRATION HAVE ANY PREFERENCE AMONG THE VOTE TO
PROCEED, THE VOTE TO SUSPEND. THEY ALL SEEM TO HAVE SOME
IMPORTANCE, WHICH I DONT UNDERSTAND.

A. I AM REALLY NOT THE BEST SOURCE ON THAT. I HAVE NOT BEEN IN ON THE TACTICAL MANEUVERING AND DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE LATE YESTERDAY. I JUST DONT KNOW.

Q. TODAY AND OVER THIS COMING WEEKEND IT IS SAID THAT THERE WILL BE AN INTENSE LOBBYING EFFORT ON BOTH SIDES. THAT MAY, IN FACT, END UP BEING TRUE. IS THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION THAT IT IS STILL PREPARED IN THIS LOBBYING EFFORT TO COMPROMISE ON SOME OF THE ISSUES OR IS IT THAT IT HAS SET FORTH ITS COMPROMISE AND INTENDS TO LOBBY ON THE BASIS OF THAT COMPROMISE?

A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE GOING TO BE ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE VARIOUS PEOPLE ON THE BASIS OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PROPOSAL AS IT HAS BEEN MODIFIED.

Q. THERE IS STILL SOME AMBIGUITY IN THE POSITION OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, AT LEAST IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS. HAVE THEY GIVEN YOU ANY PRIVATE INDICATION OF WHAT THEY REALLY WANT?

A. I REALLY CAN'T GO MUCH BEYOND THE PUBLIC RECORD ON THIS. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WHAT THEY WANT IS THE ARMS WHICH ARE IN THIS SET OF FOUR PROPOSALS INTENDED FOR THEIR USE AND I BELIEVE THAT THEY FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT THE OTHER ARMS SALES SHOULD NOT GO FORWARD.

I HAVE SEEN STORIES ABOUT A WILLINGNESS TO SEE EVERYTHING GO RATHER THAN SEE ALL OF IT GO. I HAVE NOT SEEN A GOVERNMENT POSITION ON THAT.

Q. YOU HAVE NOT SEEN THE STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE EMBASSY YESTERDAY?

A. NO. I HAVE NOT SEEN IT. BUT I WILL BE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU TELL ME WHAT IT SAYS.

Q. IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT I UNDERSTAND, AND CORRECT ME IF I AM WRONG, STATEMENTS FROM THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT THAT THEY INTEND TO AID THEIR ALLIES IN THE COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST OUR COMMON ENEMY AND SO FORTH?

IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT ASSURANCES, REAL ASSURANCES, DO WE HAVE THAT THEY CAN'T PASS SOME OF THESE F-15'S ONTO OTHER GROUPS THAT WITH, SAY, MERCENARY PILOTS MIGHT BE ABLE TO ATTACK ISRAEL?

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A. WE HAVE AGAIN, AS I THINK YOU KNOW, THE NORMAL ASSURANCES THAT GO WITH SUCH ARMS ASSISTANCE, WITH ITS THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFER PROVISIONS.

WE ALSO HAVE, AS I THINK YOU KNOW, THE SET OF ASSURANCES WHICH WE HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THEM AND WHICH WE HAVE OFFERED TO CONGRESS, WHICH INCLUDES THAT SUBJECT AND THE USE TO WHICH THEY SAY THAT THEY INTEND TO PUT THOSE PLANES. THAT IS A MATTER ON WHICH WE ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE SAUDIS AND WE BELIEVE THEY WILL HONOR IT.

Q. IS THE SECRETARY GOING TO ALTER HIS WEEKEND PLANS IN ANY WAY AND PARTICIPATE PERSONALLY IN THIS PERSUASION EFFORT WITH PERSONAL MEETINGS OR TELEPHONE CALLS TO MEMBERS OF THE SENATE?

A. LET ME SAY THAT I AM NOT AWARE OF HIS TOTAL PLAY OF WEEKEND PLANS, BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT THE SECRETARY WILL, IN FACT, BE AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION WITH VARIOUS SENATORS ON THIS SUBJECT. HE HAS DONE SO IN THE PAST. I SEE NO REASON WHY HE WOULD NOT BE DOING IT OVER THE WEEKEND.

Q. WILL HE BE MAKING ANY TELEPHONE CALLS AND INITIATING ANY CONTACTS WITH MEMBERS OF THE SENATE?

A. I REALLY HESITATE TO TRY TO READ HIS MIND. I WOULD JUST SAY IF THE PAST IS PRELUDE AT ALL, THE ANSWER WOULD BE "YES", BUT I JUST SIMPLY DONT HAVE A SCHEDULE OF HIS PHONE CALLS.

Q. DID THE SECRETARY PARTICIPATE IN THE STRATEGY SESSION AT THE WHITE HOUSE THIS MORNING ON HOW THIS NEXT THREE DAYS IS TO BE HANDLED?

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A. THE SECRETARY, AS USUAL, WAS AT THE WHITE HOUSE FOR HIS FOREIGN POLICY MEETING AT 7:30, WHICH RAN UNTIL ABOUT 9:00. AFTER THAT HE HAS BEEN UP ON THE HILL ON ANOTHER MATTER, AS I UNDERSTAND IT.

Q. THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION STIPULATED THAT SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT, IN THE USE OF THE PLANES PROPOSED TO BE

SOLD TO THEM, THEY NOT BE USED AGAINST ISRAEL. DID THE

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT REQUEST FROM ISRAEL NOT TO USE THOSE
PLANES AGAINST ANY OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES?

A. I'M NOT AWARE OF SUCH A STIPULATION.

Q. SO, IT'S FREE FOR ISRAEL TO USE THE PLANES AGAINST
ANY COUNTRY?

A. FOR THEIR DEFENSE. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE
DEFENSIVE USE OF THOSE PLANES, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, IS
WITHOUT STIPULATION.

Q. WOULD THAT INCLUDE ALSO LEBANON?

A. AGAIN, I'M SAYING THAT THE USE OF THE PLANES FOR
DEFENSIVE PURPOSES IS WITHOUT STIPULATION.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A POSITION ON THE LAWSUIT FILED YESTERDAY
BY THE ARAB-AMERICAN ORGANIZATION?

A. I DONT HAVE A POSITION ABOUT IT. WE WEREN'T
AWARE OF IT BEFORE IT WAS FILED. WE WERE NOT CONSULTED
ABOUT IT IN ANY WAY BEFOREHAND. IT IS IN FEDERAL COURT.

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Q. THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE IS TRYING TO SHUT DOWN THE
PLO OFFICES HERE AND IN NEW YORK, CLAIMING THEY HAVE
ILLEGALLY ENGAGED IN FUND-RAISING EVENTS. I BELIEVE
A LETTER WAS WRITTEN TO THE SECRETARY. DO YOU HAVE ANY
RESPONSE?

A. FIRST, THE LETTER APPARENTLY WAS RELEASED BEFORE WE
RECEIVED IT, SO I HAVE A LITTLE DIFFICULTY -- AND THAT
IS NOT ABNORMAL; I'VE SEEN THAT DONE BEFORE. WE, IN ANY
CASE, DON'T HAVE IT. I CAN'T COMMENT ON THE LETTER UNTIL
WE DO. I DONT WANT TO TRY TO PLAY WITH THIS ONE BECAUSE
I HAVE SEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL SUBJEC TS
RAISED. I EXPECT I'LL HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU ON IT WHEN
WE HAVE STUDIED IT.

Q. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF USE OF THE PLANES TO
ISRAEL, SAUDI ARABIA, AND EGYPT?

A. I'LL BE GLAD TO PROVIDE THE CONDITIONS THAT EXIST ON
THE TRANSFER OF THESE WEAPONS TO ALL THREE. VANCE

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